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**and Other Poems**



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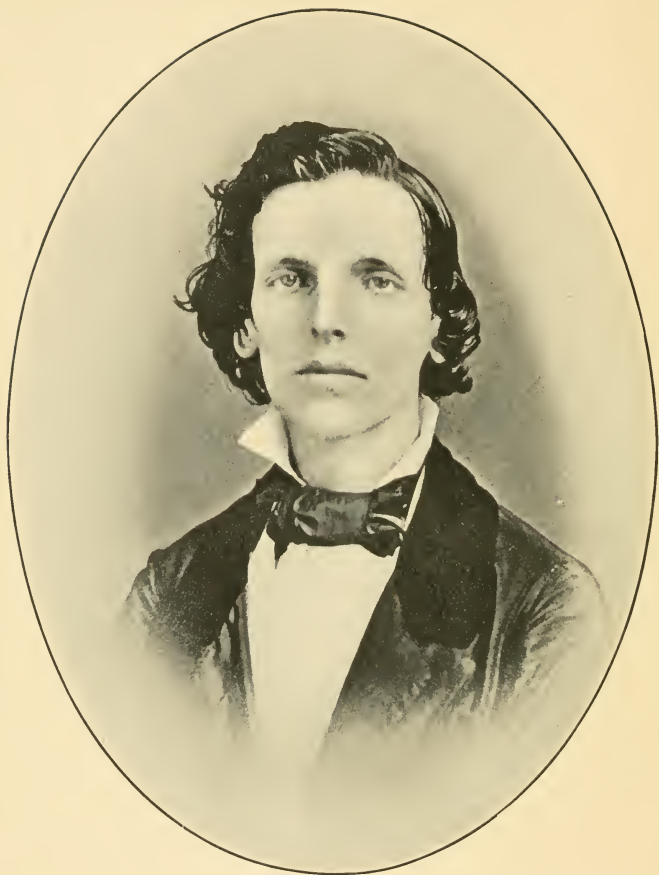


# SONGS IN THE NIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS







*Robert*



# SONGS IN THE NIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JAMES B. DURAND

ALSO

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

BY

SILAS H. DURAND

Philadelphia

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## SONGS IN THE NIGHT

Mine eyes are held through the night-watches waking,  
But peace rests on me with its soothing powers;  
And though all day my troubled heart was aching,  
His song is with me through the silent hours.

A song of hope, and trust, and sweet devotion,  
Of glad thanksgiving and o'erflowing love,  
Stillling each earth-born passion and emotion,  
And wafting peace and calmness from above.

No mortal ear, though listening in the hushes  
Of breath and heart-throb, held in still control,  
Can catch the melting flow and joyous gushes  
Of the great melody that fills my soul.

A silent song; no voice or sound expresses  
The holy comforts of its falling strain;  
But, like distilling dew, it bathes and blesses,  
Then, rising, is exhaled to heaven again.

God is Himself my Song—the Gift and Giver;  
My light His blessed Spirit shed abroad;  
While His great love, that floweth like a river,  
Makes melody within my heart to God.

But, oh, not always thus sweet peace abideth;  
Not always thus I meet His gracious smile;  
For oftentimes my wayward heart He chideth,  
And oft, offended, hides His face awhile.

Forgetful of His goodness when I wander,  
Or when forbidden paths my feet have trod,  
Then I am left all desolate to ponder,  
And feel the smittings of His chastening rod.

Oh, then comes darkness, full of gloom and sorrow,  
A sad and songless night-time of the soul!  
No light, no hope, no promise for the morrow,  
While o'er me all His waves and billows roll.

Through the blank, starless void, with anxious yearning,  
I seek, but cannot find Him anywhere;  
My spirit from its farthest quest returning,  
To answer only that He is not there.

Until my humbled soul, in deep contrition,  
Bows in the dust His mercy to implore;  
And then in love He answers my petition,  
And graciously reveals His face once more.

Thus taught by Him, my fearful heart is driven  
To trust His name when threading darkened ways,  
And thus in sorrow's deepest night are given  
Songs of deliverance and grateful praise.

The former things to sweet remembrance bringing,  
Times when His candle shined upon my head,  
My soul is filled with joy, my tongue with singing,  
And with His peace my heart is comforted.

Oh, could I sing them in an earthly measure,  
The blessed songs He gives me in the night,  
Some fainting brother's heart might share the pleasure  
That ofttimes fills me with a great delight.

With lisping tongue, but with a heart o'erflowing,  
My grateful voice to-night I fain would raise,  
And, my affections all on Him bestowing,  
Lay at His feet one offering of praise.

O God of love! how infinite and holy,  
How great in wisdom and in power Thou art!  
And yet dost make Thy dwelling with the lowly,  
And him who is of meek and contrite heart.

Under the shadow of Thy wing reposing,  
I feel that all is best which comes to me;  
I see Thy circling arms my way enclosing,  
And know that e'en my life is hid with Thee.

Thy grace divine, Thy holy consolations,  
Thy gift of faith, with its mysterious power,  
Thy love, that heavenward wings my aspirations,  
Hallow the silence of the midnight hour.

In songs of gratitude my heart would render  
Unto Thy holy name the praises due,  
For pardon, peace and countless mercies tender,  
For old things passed away, and all things new.

Each secret breathing of sincere devotion  
Reaches Thy pitying, ever-listening ear,  
And Thy great love, exhaustless as the ocean,  
Fills and encircles all Thy children here.

Throughout the darkness and the silence lonely,  
Thou art my life and hope, my strength and song;  
I find no rest but in Thy favor only,  
To whom the issues of my life belong.

Thy secret, truly, is with them that fear Thee,  
And in the depths of darkest earthly nights,  
Those who by holy love and faith dwell near Thee  
Discern the gleam of heaven's eternal lights.

My God, my Keeper, Thou dost never slumber,  
But looking on me from Thy throne above,  
Dost hear my sighings, all my heart-throbs number,  
And watch me ever with Thine eye of love.

'Tis sweet to trust Thee! for when care comes pressing,  
A thousand precious promises declare,  
How much Thou hast of comfort and of blessing,  
For those who humbly cast on Thee their care.

I question oft Thy love with doubt's denial,  
And often to vain refuges I flee;  
But in the hour of suffering and of trial  
Where can I go, O God, but unto Thee?

Life's burdens I would bear with faith's endurance,  
And, ceasing after earthly help to range,  
Rest all my hopes in Thee with full assurance,  
In whom there is no shadow of a change.

Ofttimes in sad, unquiet thoughts I languish,  
Oppressed with sin and sorrow, strife and care;  
Bowed down in spirit with a bitter anguish,  
And fearful even to cry out in prayer.

But then, if to Thy throne of mercy turning,  
I look to Thee from life's o'erdarkened ways,  
Thou givest me the oil of joy for mourning,  
And for my heaviness the voice of praise.



From Thee, the source of such unbounded blessing,  
How can my wayward footsteps ever rove?  
In humbleness of heart I bow confessing  
That I am all unworthy of Thy love.

Yet grant me still to know my soul partaketh  
Thy saving grace, whate'er my faults have been;  
Still may I trust the Lamb of God who taketh  
Away the burden and the stain of sin.

The silent, shadowy hours move onward slowly,  
But a sweet sense of joy abides with me;  
One thought alone makes the night-watches holy,  
The blessed thought that I am still with Thee.

And morning cometh! soon these watchings ended,  
Soon all these earthly nights and vigils o'er,  
On the freed soul shall break the radiance splendid,  
Of perfect day upon the sinless shore.

Oh, there shall be no more of restless sighing,  
No more of sorrow and of blighting care;  
For in that glorious home of bliss undying,  
No shadow falleth, and no night is there.

Rapt in such thoughts, peace floweth like a river,  
Filling with voiceless songs the silence deep;  
Songs holy as the angels sing forever;  
And thus Thou givest Thy beloved sleep.

---

"Where is God, my Maker, who giveth songs in  
the night?" Job 35: 10.

"In the night His song shall be with me." Ps. 42: 8.

"I call to remembrance my songs in the night."  
Ps. 77: 6.

"Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel." Isa. 30: 29.

"Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." Ps. 32: 7.

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." Ps. 119: 54.

"Thou art to them a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice." Ez. 33: 32.

## THE DIRGE AND ANTHEM

ISAIAH 40: 6-8; 1 PETER 1: 24, 25

Hark to the dirge! All flesh is grass,  
And all its glory but the flower  
O'er which the winds of summer pass,  
And blight its beauty in an hour.  
Thus breathed the Prophet's solemn strain;  
And autumn winds each fading year  
Sighing, take up the sad refrain,  
And pour its burden on the ear.

All flesh is grass, and all its boast  
Is but the fleeting moment's birth;  
The pomp of kings, the conqueror's host,  
Which shook with war the startled earth;  
The cities builded great and strong,  
The monuments of human pride,  
All vanish like the breath of song,  
Or sunset hues at eventide.

The threefold cords of human love,  
That seemed but now as strong as death,  
Frail as the spider's weaving prove,  
And they are broken by a breath.  
Our precious treasures take them wings;  
Hope perishes and joy lies dead;  
And thus earth's unsubstantial things  
We only grasp to find them fled.

Nothing continues in one stay  
Of all our mortal eyes behold;  
This firm-set earth shall pass away,  
The very heavens themselves grow old.  
They shall be rolled away in flame,  
And a great voice, from shore to shore,  
The awful sentence shall proclaim  
That earth and time shall be no more!

Weak, doubting, trembling, thus we stand,  
'Midst this vain show with fearful feet,  
While mournful tones on every hand  
The Prophet's solemn words repeat.  
Are all things then delusions vain,  
And man but earth's unnoted dust?  
Doth no foundation then remain  
On which to build a hope or trust?

O trembling one, O fainting soul,  
Turn from the dirge, and thou shalt hear  
A great, rejoicing anthem roll  
From the same tongue to bless thine ear.  
Earth's shadows vanish as they came;  
But though the sun itself grow pale,  
God is forevermore the same;  
His years, O man, shall never fail.

We are the creatures of His hand ;  
His eye beholds both great and small ;  
His throne forevermore shall stand ;  
His kingdom ruleth over all.  
From everlasting is the Lord,  
And all His promises are sure ;  
Faithful and true, the Eternal Word  
Through endless ages shall endure.

Pilgrims of earth, fresh courage take ;  
The Lord of all, who reigns above,  
Has promised never to forsake  
Or leave the children of His love.  
The mighty God, he fainteth not,  
Neither is weary, but will keep  
His chosen in their earthly lot,  
As the good shepherd keeps his sheep.

Because He lives His own shall live,  
And in His glorious presence stand ;  
To them all blessings He will give,  
And none shall pluck them from His hand.  
'Midst tears and sorrow, sin and death,  
And all earth's troubles and alarms,  
He is their refuge, and beneath  
They find His everlasting arms.

Daily to them His grace shall come,  
Whom His redeeming love hath blest ;  
And He at last will take them home  
To His eternal heaven of rest.  
Around His throne the saints behold,  
Redeemed from earth and sin's alloy,  
In robes of white, with harps of gold,  
Raising eternal songs of joy.

## SHOW ME THY GLORY

EXODUS 33: 18

Show me Thy glory, O my God,  
And be Thy truth displayed!  
Thus with a trembling, waiting hope,  
I pray as Moses prayed.  
In visions bright of holy light,  
Reveal thyself to me;  
While I with humble longings wait,  
My soul doth pant for Thee.

Show me Thy glory and Thy power,  
But show me not in ire,  
As in the Mount Thou didst appear  
In thunderings and fire.  
For if Thou shouldst unto my prayer  
Thy burning presence give,  
I could but die; for none behold  
Thy unveiled face and live.

Hide me within the clefted Rock  
In that o'erwhelming hour,  
And with Thy hand oh cover me  
From Thy consuming power.  
And there proclaim Thy wondrous name,  
And let before me pass  
The vision of Thy boundless love,  
Thy goodness and Thy grace.

Thy works all praise Thee, and I see  
Thy wondrous power displayed,  
Thy wisdom and Thy glory, Lord,  
In all Thy hand hath made.  
I read Thy boundless goodness there  
Written in glowing lines ;  
But in the Kingdom of Thy grace  
Thy glory brighter shines.

There I would see Thee clothed in love,  
But there my dim eyes fail ;  
O give me power, with eyes of faith,  
To pierce beyond the veil.  
Open my ears that I may hear,  
And give me eyes to see  
What untold glories there are hid  
For those who wait on Thee.

Thou speakest in the tempest's roar,  
When ocean's depths are stirred,  
And in the thunder's awful tones  
Thy mighty voice is heard.  
But speak to me in love and peace,  
Then shall my soul rejoice ;  
Oh, I beseech Thee grant to me  
To hear Thy still, small voice.

The prayer of Moses reached Thine ear,  
And Thou didst condescend  
To give Thy presence unto him,  
And talk as friend to friend.  
I am not worthy, yet I pray,  
And wait in longing fear ;  
For Thou unto the contrite heart  
Hast promised to draw near.

Oh, shine into my heart to give  
The knowledge of Thy grace,  
Thy glory and Thy saving love  
In the Redeemer's face.  
And in the blessed Lamb of God  
May I behold by faith  
My Saviour and my gracious King,  
My hope in life and death.

Though clouds and darkness veil Thy throne,  
And mortal eyes are dim,  
In Christ Thy glorious image shines,  
Thy fulness dwells in Him.  
To Him by Thee all power is given,  
The scepter and the crown;  
In Him Thy glory bowed the heavens,  
And to the earth came down.

And having conquered sin and death  
By His almighty power,  
He burst the darkness of the tomb  
At the appointed hour.  
And now at Thy right hand He sits,  
Upon Thy throne of love,  
To give to all Thy chosen ones  
His Spirit from above.

May I by faith behold Him there,  
The fount of life and grace,  
And in His countenance discern  
The Father's smiling face.  
Then shall be answered all my prayer;  
Thy glory I shall see,  
And wait in hope till Thou shalt take  
My longing soul to Thee.

## ORDINATION HYMN

O Thou, who callest, and the laborers come  
Into Thy harvest field;  
At whose great mandate adverse pride is dumb,  
And human will must yield;

One more hath heard Thy bidding, and now stands  
Ready to do Thy will;  
To speak Thy word, to go at Thy command,  
And all Thy work fulfil.

And that Thy people our fraternal care  
And fellowship may see,  
Our brother now, with solemn rite and prayer,  
We consecrate to Thee.

As he goes forth Thy gospel to proclaim,  
Go Thou with him, we pray,  
And lead him, for the glory of Thy name,  
In wisdom's shining way.

Thy gracious gifts shed on him from above;  
Instruct him in Thy ways;  
And open Thou his lips, O God of love,  
That he may speak Thy praise.

Through all his ministry may heavenly grace  
Reign in his heart supreme;  
And in Thy house, and still in every place,  
May Christ be all his theme.



With Thine own armor, Lord, Thy servant gird,  
And sanctify his tongue,  
That he may cease from man, and trust Thy word,  
And in Thy might be strong.

This earthen vessel with Thy treasure fill;  
Daily Thy grace renew;  
And may Thy doctrine from his tongue distil  
Like the refreshing dew.

And as he speaks Thy words of holy cheer,  
We pray Thee, Lord, impart  
Unto Thy waiting ones the hearing ear,  
And understanding heart.

If human wisdom, with deceiving glare,  
Would charm him to her seat,  
Or vain philosophy should weave a snare  
For his unguarded feet,

The fatal lures of error may he spurn,  
All vain delusions flee;  
And to the volume of Thy wisdom turn,  
And learn alone of Thee.

We know the world, with its perplexing strife,  
And care, and vain turmoil,  
Will oftentimes mar his peace, and fill his life  
With trouble and with toil.

But when his onward path grows rough and dim,  
And trials crowd his way,  
Oh, then, thou God of comfort, comfort him  
With Thine own peace, we pray.

Thus shall he learn to comfort such as be  
Through darkened pathways led,  
With the same consolations wherewith he  
Himself is comforted.

If weary and o'erwrought he fainting stands,  
'Midst care, and doubt, and fear,  
Oh, teach Thy people to sustain his hands,  
And give him words of cheer.

But most of all, grant Thou Thy servant, Lord,  
Fresh strength from hour to hour,  
That he may falter not, but speak Thy word  
With boldness and with power.

And thus serenely may he walk the way  
Thy saints have ever trod,  
And labor gladly his appointed day,  
Under the smile of God.

The work is Thine, the glory all Thine own ;  
In Thee Thy children live ;  
When at Thy bidding precious seed is sown,  
Thou dost the increase give.

Our thanks for all Thy gifts to Thee we bring,  
And grateful songs we raise ;  
To Thy great name, our Saviour and our King,  
Be everlasting praise.

## “I WILL ARISE AND GO TO MY FATHER ”

Father in heaven, to Thee,  
A weary child, I flee,  
In this still hour, the hush of toil and care;  
And fain would reach Thine ear  
With words of suppliant fear,  
And breathe my yearnings unto Thee in prayer.

This burden of unrest  
That loads my troubled breast,  
These longings after peace and hope divine,  
These penitential sighs,  
And panting hopes that rise,  
I cannot trust to any ear but Thine.

A frail and erring child,  
Weak, tempted and beguiled,  
Beset with sins and sorrows, cares and fears,  
A prodigal, I come  
To find my Father's home,  
And seek His face in penitence and tears.

And can I dare to claim  
A child's endearing name,  
I, but a worm, a brother of the clod?  
What manner, then, of love  
Hath blessed me from above,  
That I may deem myself a child of God!

Oh, may Thy love divine  
Reign in this heart of mine !  
Send forth in me the Spirit of Thy Son,  
That I to Thee may fly,  
And, "Abba, Father !" cry,  
Saying, in all things, "Let Thy will be done."

My way I cannot see,  
But stretch my hands to Thee ;  
Oh, lead me gently onward to Thy rest ;  
Content may I receive  
Whatever Thou dost give,  
And bow submissive, feeling it is best.

Remove these clogs of care,  
And wing my words of prayer  
With faith, that heavenward they may soar away ;  
A trustful mind bestow,  
And give my heart to know  
That Thou wilt hear Thy children when they pray.

Of wrong and sin afraid,  
I humbly ask Thy aid,  
Father of mercies ! through life's thorny maze ;  
For every pure desire  
Thy Spirit must inspire,  
And Thou alone canst lead me in Thy ways.

All holy things are Thine !  
Oh, make this heart of mine  
Pure in Thy sight, and Thine it then shall be.  
My will to Thine subdue,  
My soul with grace renew,  
That nearer I may daily live to Thee.

In dark temptation's hour  
Oh, keep me by Thy power,  
And guard my heart when evil thoughts assail;  
All holiest trust and love  
Shed on me from above,  
And grant me strength divine, for I am frail.

Sustain my fainting heart;  
Bid all my fears depart;  
Childlike, I fain would yield to Thy control.  
In Thee may I rejoice,  
And hear Thy still, small voice  
Speak hope and comfort to my troubled soul.

I would not have my life  
All marred with care and strife;  
Earth's luring vanities I fain would flee,  
And with a holy love,  
That looks to things above,  
Would consecrate, O Father, all to Thee.

Earth hath no balm to heal  
The maladies I feel;  
No oil of joy to soothe the heart oppressed;  
Thou only canst bestow  
Relief from sin and woe,  
And dews of healing for the wounded breast.

Here in this sacred place  
May I behold Thy face,  
In the Beloved, smiling, reconciled;  
Then peace and joy and love  
Shall lift my soul above,  
And I shall know, indeed, I am Thy child.

And life's perplexing cares,  
And sin's beguiling snares,  
Shall then no longer darken all my days;  
But from my soul shall rise  
The constant sacrifice  
Of glad obedience, and of joyful praise.

Father in heaven! I flee  
To cast my cares on Thee;  
Speak to my spirit in Thy tones of love;  
Watch o'er me here below,  
And keep me till I go  
To dwell forever in Thy house above.

## MEMOIR

I will write briefly of my brother, James B. Durand, who was born November 8, 1829, and died April 20, 1866. He was the ninth in a family of fourteen children of Daniel and Asenath Durand, of whom nine were sons. He was not strong in body, but had superior mental power, and his energetic mind and persistent disposition would often force his body to the accomplishment of work from which much stronger men would shrink.

At the age of fifteen he left our home in Herrick, Bradford County, Pa., for the city of New Orleans, La., to live with an older brother, who had lived in that city many years. I was three years younger than he, and we both deeply felt this our first parting. During the years of his school life there he wrote much, both prose and verse, for the city papers. After about four years he returned home, where he taught two terms of school. Then he went again to New Orleans, where he remained, with the exception of one or two visits home, until the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, engaged as bookkeeper and corresponding clerk in a large commission house. He wrote much for publication. Once, during the absence of the literary editor of the *Sunday Delta*, he took that position for a short time, and during that time it was very evident that he could write what the people wanted to read. He was a constituent member

of the "Jeffersonian Debating Society," afterwards named "The Southern Literary Society," which included a number of the excellent young men of the city.

In the summer of 1853 occurred the greatest and most terrible epidemic of yellow fever which had ever ravaged that city. The number of deaths rose in one day to 390. My brother was engaged with the Howard Society in seeking out cases among the poor, and rendering all needed help that was possible. He exerted himself beyond his strength, and the scourge finally attacked him. At our home we had heard from him often during the ravages of the terrible epidemic, as he always wrote home once a week, if not oftener. At this time we waited several weeks, in the greatest anxiety. At length we had a very brief letter, written as soon as he could hold a pen. The city was a scene of terror and desolation. In October of that year, as soon as I heard of a frost there, I went, and remained till the following July, when we both returned home. He returned to his work there in the fall, and I went again in 1855, remaining till the following June. During that time a younger brother, Warren, was there also, and he remained there for several years. This made six brothers who were residents of that city at sometime. One, George, ten years older than I, died there in 1843. None of us was ever there after the beginning of the war.

At a meeting of the Southern Literary Society about the time of the beginning of the war, which was held in the largest auditorium in the city, before an immense audience, my brother read a poem in which a war between the lovely sister band of States was deprecated. The poem was most beautiful, impassioned, touching, and was listened to with rapt



and intense attention. The city was much excited at the time, as Fort Sumpter had been fired upon, and the sound of war was in the air. There was much difference of sentiment among the people. The popularity of my brother, and the kindly feeling universally entertained toward him, was manifested in the papers the next morning, even from those who were ready to welcome war.

He returned home in 1861 and took a position in the Treasury Department in Washington, in which he continued for three years, when his health failed. He has told us in the relation of his experience, which will follow this memoir, some particulars of his life and exercises of mind at this time.

After he became unable to work and returned to our home, he selected from his writings, both published and unpublished, such as he cared to preserve, and I have them in manuscript, in book form, but have never published them. He named the book "Evening Talks." The style is easy and graceful, both of the poetry and prose, and the sentiments clear and beautiful. Some of the essays have a pleasant humor. I will insert one of the poems.

SILAS H. DURAND.

Southampton, Pa.

## OVER THE SEA

Over the sea the ships are sailing,  
    Always sailing over the sea,  
And the west winds bear them onward  
    Through the trackless waste with glee.  
Now they battle with cloud and tempest,  
    Now they sleep in a sunny lea,  
Till they rest in the distant haven  
    Over the sea.

Over the sea our restless fancies,  
    Fleeter than ships or breezes, go;  
Caring not for cloud or tempest,  
    Waiting not for the winds to blow.  
Outward bound are our thoughts forever,  
    And their sails float always free,  
Bearing them on without chart or compass,  
    Over the sea.

Over the sea the ships are sailing,  
    And they pass by the Golden Isles,  
Hid away in the waste of waters,  
    Where perennial beauty smiles.  
Now they pause by the shining beaches,  
    Breathing odors from tower and tree;  
Then away on their pathless journey,  
    Over the sea.

Over the sea and beyond the billows,  
There are strange and marvellous lands ;  
Valleys that sleep in primeval beauty,  
Rivers that roll over golden sands ;  
Cities built in the by-gone ages,  
Ruins where grandeur used to be ;  
Palace and column and quaint old castles,  
Over the sea.

Over the sea is the land of story,  
Over the sea is the realm of song ;  
And 'round temple and tower and hamlet  
Tale and legend and fable throng.  
From the mind in those olden places  
All the cares of the present flee,  
And we live in a land enchanted,  
Over the sea.

Over the sea, on the tombs of nations  
Rests the fadeless sunshine of art ;  
And from column and arch and ruin  
Falls its glow on the pilgrim's heart.  
And the spirit of ancient beauty  
Still undying seems to be,  
Where it won its deathless triumphs,  
Over the sea.

Over the sea brave chieftains battled  
In the old, heroic days,  
And their deeds still live and echo  
In the minstrel's cherished lays ;  
Then the feasts of knights and ladies  
Filled the quaint old halls with glee,  
When the battle-strife was ended,  
Over the sea.

Over the sea rest the sacred ashes  
Of those who toiled for the good of man ;  
There is the ground where the blood of martyrs,  
A blessed stream of redemption ran.  
There sleep the bards who have filled the ages  
With holy thoughts and tones of glee,  
Which come to us like the sounds of music,  
Over the sea.

Over the sea the ships are sailing,  
Till the distant haven is found ;  
And like them with anchors lifted,  
Thought and fancy are outward bound.  
On to the realms of the distant future,  
On to the shores of the great To-be,  
Speed they always away from the present,  
Over the sea.

Over the sea that stretches onward,  
With a waste of billowy years,  
Through the mists and clouds and tempests  
Hope its chartless journey steers.  
Far beyond is the Land Immortal,  
And the realms of the great To-be ;  
And but faint the beacons glimmer,  
Over the sea.

Over the sea we all are sailing,  
Over the restless sea of life ;  
And we pause at the Golden Islands,  
And we battle with tempest's strife.  
Soon shall the toils of the voyage be over,  
Folded soon shall the worn sails be,  
When we reach the Immortal Country,  
Over the sea.

## EXPERIENCE

HERRICK, PA., August 22, 1865.

“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”—1 Peter iii: 15.

It is a constant source of surprise and astonishment to me that I am an Old School Baptist. My friends and acquaintances cannot wonder at it more than I do. All of my natural tendencies seem to have been in an entirely opposite direction. When I think of it, and consider what a mass of pride, and vain imaginations, and all manner of seductive error had to be overcome; and what a self-asserting, rebellious, unbelieving spirit had to be subdued in me before my heart was opened to receive the trusting faith and the spiritual truths of the gospel; and when I reflect upon the great change which was required to make me willing and anxious to follow Him who was meek and lowly of heart, and to join the little, despised, Old School Baptist Church where my name now stands as an unworthy member, it seems to me that such a change could only be effected by Him with whom all things are possible. Indeed I am enabled to hope and believe, with some confidence, that it was the Lord's work, fulfilling the words which He spake when He said: “I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and

crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them." Of this, at least, I feel assured: If I have indeed been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; if I have been enabled to cry "Abba, Father," to worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh, it has not been the result of any work or effort of my own, but alone through the free, effectual and renewing grace of God. It is, that He hath loved me with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness has drawn me. And so I "rejoice in hope," trusting that I have been led into the fold by the good Shepherd, who calleth His own sheep by name, and goeth before them; and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice.

While attending the Warwick Association in June, I was requested by several to write out my experience for publication; and since then the same request has been made by others. While I hardly hope to write out such a statement as will be satisfactory either to myself or any one else, yet in the face of the apostle's injunction placed at the head of this sheet, I do not feel at liberty to refuse. I desire to make the attempt "with meekness and fear."

I might state in general terms, and in a general way, the reason of my hope in Christ, as founded upon His complete work of redemption for His chosen people, and my belief that He had manifested himself to me as my Savior. But something more than this is desired. I am requested to give an account of all the way in which I have been led through the wilderness of sin and error into the beautiful land of hope and Christian belief. The most, however, that I can

expect to do, will be to make some imperfect and fragmentary notes of this strange journey; to give a few broken hints of what I have felt and feared and hoped; to gather up a few waifs from the great sea of past and restless years; to tell how, when the tempest was raging and there was no hope, I cried "Lord, save or I perish," and heard his blessed "Peace be still!"—and to say, in view of all these things, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever!"

We have all, at some time in our life, experienced occasional hours of such deep and varied and intense thought and feeling, that a full account of our exercises would fill pages. How then can one hope in the space of a single communication to give any adequate report of the struggles and fears and hopes of an agitated and perplexed soul through months and years? Who can adequately tell the story of *one night* spent under those piercing convictions of sin, when the light that shineth in darkness makes manifest one's true condition in the sight of a perfectly just and holy God, and enables him to see the horrible pit and miry clay in which he has been wallowing? And then when He who is mighty to help, takes up the trembling sinner from these depths of despair, and sets his feet upon a rock, and puts a new song in his mouth, what words can express his joy, and that peace of God which passeth all understanding?

There is something so sacred and personal in these experiences that to publish them seems like throwing open one's bosom and exhibiting the pal-

pitating throbs of one's heart to the public gaze. Prayer is a large element in a Christian experience; and our Savior's injunction is, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." To publish the secrets of that closet to the world, if intended for the eyes of "the world," would undoubtedly be wrong. And yet the heaven-born soul desires to make known the goodness of God; desires to sing the new song which has been put into his mouth; and longs to tell, not to the world, but to "them that fear God," what the Lord has done for him. He says with the Psalmist, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all *his* people." When with the children of our heavenly Father, sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, we love to talk about this new life, and these "comforts of love," and these hopes and joys which are inexpressible and full of glory. Our brethren are made near and dear to us by the bonds of divine love, and they can understand us through the teachings of God to their own souls, and the fellowship of the same spirit; and thus the children of the kingdom "comfort themselves together" with the precious promises of the gospel, and by their "mutual faith" and hope and love.

Looking over the past, through all the years of dinness and shadow which preceded my full awakening and deliverance, I find transient moments when I seemed to have a glimmering realization of the eternal realities which span this wonderful and mysterious existence. I had read the Bible through at a very early age; and even then my mind was filled with questionings upon the subjects thus brought to my attention. I could tell of boyish reflections and



resolutions and prayers, but presume all intelligent children experience the same. At the age of fifteen I left my home, to live in the city of New Orleans. I had never been away from home, and the thought of being separated so many hundred miles from my parents, brothers and sisters was a very serious one to me. The night before starting was spent in sleeplessness and tears. I remember praying earnestly that God would watch over me and preserve me, so that I might see home once again. The only thought in these prayers, as I recall them now, was temporal care and protection. There was no penitent sense of sin, and no spiritual character to them; but a mere feeling that God ruled all things, and could, and would if I prayed to Him sincerely, answer my prayers and preserve me from sickness and danger. And I made many promises that if He would grant my request, I would lead a better life and try and avoid every evil way. But the excitement of the journey, the constant interest of new and passing scenes, and the natural lightness of my heart drove all these thoughts away.

When once in New Orleans, the attractions and excitements of city life, school pleasures, and, afterwards, the engrossing affairs of business and society fully occupied my mind. I rejoiced in my youth, and let my heart cheer me in the days of my youth, and walked in the ways of my heart and in the sight of my eyes, heeding not the warning voice of the preacher, the truth of whose words I have since learned by bitter experience, that "for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." I continued to read the Bible not only from habit, but because my intellectual taste was gratified by the poetry and sublimity in which many portions, especially the Psalms and

prophecies, are clothed. But the veil was before my eyes which hid from me its spiritual import. I was in the habit of attending church regularly, but my object was to go where I could hear the most polished and eloquent preachers, listen to the finest music and see the most fashionable congregations.

Sometimes my natural emotions would be awakened and my feelings deeply touched by the warm and passionate appeals to which I listened; and I would renew my resolutions to lead a better life, and try and be a Christian. For a time I would read the scriptures with renewed application, and resume my prayers. And in these efforts I would feel considerable self-complacency and satisfaction. I joined the "Young Men's Christian Association," a very numerous and popular religious society, and took an active part in its affairs. I thought the society of Christian young men would be beneficial to me. I also had many thoughts of the duty of making a public profession of my regard for religion by joining some church. I was constantly urged from the pulpit to "come out on the Lord's side," and by so doing show to the world my approval of the beneficial character of religion. In looking around for a church to join, among the numerous sects and denominations, I thought that the Episcopal church would suit me better than any other. Its forms were solemn and imposing, its requirements very liberal, and it afforded scope for great freedom of belief. I did not fancy any strait and narrow way. This church was an institution of high respectability, its members generally distinguished for intelligence and refinement and all its services were conducted with propriety and decorum. No doubt these things have lured many a one, proud

and self-complaisant, as I then was, into her embrace. But the nearest I came to joining was considering the subject, and buying a prayer book.

It has often been remarked that "man is naturally a religious being." I always had some kind of religion in my head, either gathered from books or spun out of my own imagination. I had no idea of a change of heart, of the new birth, of the Spirit's work in the soul; but only of an outward reformation of life. I looked upon religion as the perfection of morals, attainable as was any other kind of human excellence. My natural pride of character kept me from the outspoken and prevalent vices of the city. I did not hate sin because it was hateful in the sight of God, but I hated low and vicious practices because they were unlovely in themselves, and were disreputable in good society.

I had always possessed an active spirit of inquiry which constantly compelled me to investigate, and, if possible, explain the mysteries involved in the questions, "What is life?" "What is death?" "Who and what is God?" I tried to "look through nature up to nature's God," and there bestow my worship. If I could not tell what I believed, it was still as difficult to tell what I did not believe. The intellectual society into which I was mostly thrown was of a rather "liberal" free thinking order, not atheistic, for that would have shocked me, but favoring what is known as "Progressive Christianity." I gradually imbibed its ideas, as they were flattering to my natural feelings, and as they repudiated those features which seemed so hard and harsh in orthodoxy. I gloried in the doctrine of man's moral ability and intellectual supremacy. I regarded the cultivated intellect of man as the foun-

tain of the highest truth; thought nothing too high and nothing too deep for human comprehension; and that reason was the test of all religious truth. And although I considered myself a sincere inquirer after truth, it was only in the philosophy of men, wherein I believed were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." I was fascinated with human speculations upon man's nature and destiny, and forgot entirely the injunction, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not!" And under these teachings, my conscience was soothed and lulled by the Siren song, that the Eternal Benevolence would not punish with everlasting wrath the light and trifling sins and follies of youth.

I have perhaps dwelt too long upon these things; but I mention them to show what a mass of vain speculation and seductive error blinded me to the plain teachings of the scripture. I also mention them because the dragons of speculation, which I had become familiar with in these wastes of rationalism assailed me in my early experience, when, sinking without hope, I caught even at such straws for support. But at that time philosophy only mocked my hungry soul. Its dim and doubtful conjecture could not give me any relief. Its glimmering lamp threw no light upon the awful darkness of the tomb. It brought back no message from the eternity which stretches beyond the grave.

It sometimes seems to me that there is more hope for a heathen, who never heard of revealed religion, more hope of the conversion of an ignorant and degraded outcast, who had always lived in an atmosphere of vice and crime and who had never given one thought to serious things, than for one whose head

had been filled with all manner of erroneous religious speculations. But he "who worketh and none can hinder," can turn the wisdom of man into foolishness, and bring the proudest and vainest heart down into the dust of contrition and humility at the foot of the cross, there to plead for mercy.

It is somewhat strange and inconsistent that, with all my vagrant religious theories, I always held, as an intellectual belief, the doctrine of God's overruling providence, and His foreknowledge and absolute predestination of all things. This belief was to my mind a logical necessity, resulting inevitably from the acknowledged character of God, as an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent being. It also seemed to me the plain and unmistakable teaching of the scriptures. I did not attempt to reconcile it with my notions of man's moral ability and freedom in working out his own destiny. In fact, I tried to perform the impossibility required by modern teachers, of believing that both doctrines are true. I often contended warmly with my acquaintances for the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God, though I did not see in that doctrine then, as I now do, His electing love, and the only ground of hope for the salvation of sinners. During this period, something, I know not what, induced me to take the "Signs." In reading it I became familiar with the general doctrine and belief of the Old School Baptists, though I thought it a harsh, crabbed paper, and in every way unsympathizing with man's highest nature and noblest aspirations; as it put so small an estimate upon the popular institutions of the age, and the elevating tendency of intellectual progress.

In letters received from home, I was informed of the severe troubles of mind which my sister Bessie experienced in her passage from darkness to light, bringing her almost to the grave; and which she has told in the relation of her experience as published in the "Signs." Loving her always most deeply, and sympathizing with her in her troubles and distress to an extent that almost unfitted me for business, I laid all the blame of it upon the Old School Baptists. I considered it the result of their harsh and cruel doctrine acting upon a tender and sensitive mind; and my feelings of bitterness against them were intense. I remember writing some bitter things on the subject to my brother Silas; denouncing those who taught and encouraged the belief that the new birth must be accompanied by such throes of agony. I never lost the feeling thus acquired, until I was brought myself to taste the wormwood and the gall, which had been gathering for me in the cup of sin and folly. Then I no longer blamed the Old School Baptists, but only my own perverse and wicked heart; and I then saw that their doctrine, instead of being "harsh and cruel," was the only doctrine that gave any hope to such a helpless, despairing sinner, as I was; for it told of a full, free, complete salvation in Christ for all who were laboring and heavy laden under the burden of sin, and who were brought to cry for mercy.

In July, 1861, three months after the war commenced, finding myself in precarious health, and effectually cut off from all communication with home, I resolved to venture the trip through the lines; and much to the surprise of my family, as well as myself, reached home in safety. During 1863 and the first part of 1864 I filled a clerkship in the Treasury

Department at Washington. The duties of my office, and the war-excitements of the Capital engrossed my mind so completely, that I had but little time or inclination to think upon those serious things which are of such deep personal interest. Sometimes, however, they would come surging over my mind with great power; especially when visiting the crowded hospitals after a battle, and seeing and conversing with the mangled and suffering victims of war. At such times, human life, which I had regarded as so sacred and precious, so dignified and grand in its attributes and relations, would seem to me valueless, mean and ephemeral. I felt as though I could say with the preacher, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever, seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten." Death seemed only the extinguishing of a spark, and I sometimes feared I should falter in my belief of a future life. When I witnessed vast bodies of troops thronging the streets, and thought how each individual was lost in the sweeping mass, regarded only as an atom of physical force in the surging columns, the individual man seemed to sink into utter insignificance; and I could understand how, in the sight of the great God, the multitudes of earth "were but as grasshoppers," and less than nothing, and vanity. I could not help thinking how each one of those unnoted thousands had been born into the world as unheeded as the expanding of a bud in the midst of the forest; how each one, while flattering himself of his own importance, had lived on, toiling, resting, sorrowing, rejoicing; and yet all these agitations in his life had



been to the world as unimportant as the trembling of a leaf or the ripple of a wave. And when, one after another, each of these restless thousands shall drop away, and the dust shall close over him, it will be as though a drop of rain had sunk into the bosom of the earth. Under the pressure of such thoughts, I was awed by a sense of my own insignificance, and even shuddered lest the great Creative Eye, itself, should overlook me, and leave me to sink unmarked into nothingness.

But then, again, in quietude and retirement, thinking of the experiences of my own life, feeling it animated by peculiar hopes and anxieties, and girt about with a circlet of the most precious affections, I would become reassured; and see that there was an awful and sacred reality in life. And then my mind would reach forward towards the great future—that future which stretches away into an endless eternity; and my whole being would throb and pulsate with undefinable anxieties, and dim aspirations after a better and higher life; and half formed hopes and fears would fill my soul, as I blindly grasped after some far-off and unattained reality.

I remember that often, at such times, there would come over me such a sense of sinfulness, and utter unworthiness, as I thought of the holiness of God, and the glory of that better life as portrayed in the scriptures, and as revealed to John upon the Isle of Patmos, that I could only feel the impossibility of my ever realizing its unspeakable joys. And I recall times, through many past years, when, perhaps in the whirl of business or pleasure, or walking the streets, but most frequently in the still watches of the night, a sense of the utter sinfulness of my nature, the deceit-



fulness of my heart, the unworthiness of my motives, and my absolute lack of that moral excellence which I had so often promised myself, would so come over me that my life seemed to me an ignominious failure. I felt as though I would like to hide away from all eyes, and I thoroughly hated myself for being what I was. Whether these feelings were merely natural, or the result of a gleam of spiritual light, I do not know.

I attended church but seldom in Washington. At first, I visited most of the churches out of curiosity; but as I heard little from the pulpit except harangues upon war and politics, and as I had enough of that outside, I entirely ceased going. I did not at that time know that there was an Old School Baptist church in Washington, or I should doubtless have visited that also.

In February, 1864, I was called home to see my brother Warren, who was not at that time expected to live. I found him in the condition which he has described in his communication to the "Signs." My brother Silas had also been called home, and we had, indeed, a serious and solemn time. During those sad days of anxiety and nights of watching, we had many a serious talk upon the subject of religion, and my mind was agitated deeply. Having only a month's leave of absence, as Warren somewhat improved, I returned to Washington, my soul greatly disquieted within me. Convictions of my own real condition before God, as a sinner, came over me, and occupied my thoughts much of the time. I tried to fight them off with my philosophy—tried to convince myself that they were only the results of mental excitement, and that there had been really nothing in my life to justify such feelings of condemnation. Failing in this I

thought to banish my troubles of mind by application to business, and in the excitements and blandishments of society. Though I could not drown the reproachful voices within me, I succeeded, to some extent in dulling their sharpness. I felt as though I could say in the language of the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm: "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I say surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee." Being always of delicate health, my constant anxiety on Warren's account, my own troubles of mind, together with the exhausting confinement of my daily business, prostrated me with a severe fit of sickness, which brought me to the very brink of the grave. And what a month of sickness that was to me,—sickness of body and of mind,—helpless with disease and despairing of soul! My whole past life rose before me as one black record of rebellion to God's holy law. The follies and wickedness of my youth, the deceitfulness of my heart and the unholiness of all my motives and desires, stared me in the face; and I felt that, truly, "for all these things God had brought me into judgment." With my room-mate, and also with the lady of the house where I was staying, I often talked upon the subject, as my troubles were so great that I could not keep them entirely to myself. One night it was thought by all present, as well as by myself, that the last hour had come, when the golden bowl should be broken. Those around my bed were in tears, (comparative strangers though they were,) and I gave some few directions in regard to my affairs. As my breath became shorter, and my eyes seemed

to grow dim with the shadows of the dark valley, my mind became clear and comparatively placid; and I looked death calmly in the eye. I shall never forget that hour. I think I realized then, to a great extent, what it is to die. And, in that awful hour, I felt an undefined hope in the mercy of God through Christ, and a quieting sense of resignation. Strange as it seemed to all, I survived the night. The next day my physician advised that I should be taken home as soon as it was possible for me to endure the journey. My brother Silas was sent for to accompany me home. After his arrival, Elder W. J. Purington, informed by him of my sickness, called to see me twice; but I said nothing to him about the troubles of mind which I had been passing through. Not being able to sit up much, the journey home was a severe one. But once at home, I continued to improve faster than I expected.

During the month I remained at home, my serious thoughts and feelings continued and I spent much of my time in reading the scriptures. Though still laboring under convictions of sin, yet much of their intensity and sharpness had gone; and a dim and undefined hope seemed to gleam in upon my soul, like a star glimmering through mists and clouds. It was not so much a belief that I was a subject of grace, as a hope that I should become so. I prayed earnestly for some manifestation of the forgiveness of my sins; that God would create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me, and reveal to me the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, as my Savior. I thought I felt truly a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and hoped that sometime I should realize the blessing and be filled. I had

lost all confidence in myself, in my own good resolutions and efforts, and felt that only God by His almighty power was able to save me.

My leave of absence having expired, I concluded to go back to my place again, though against the advice of physician and friends. One strong reason for my wishing to return was, that I might see and talk with Elder Purington, and hear him preach. I hoped, by opening my mind fully to him, he might have some word of hope and encouragement for me. The trip back proved too much for my debilitated system, and after one day at the office, I was again prostrated; and my physician insisted upon my immediate return home again. So without seeing Elder Purington, I was accompanied home by a friend. This journey over, and once more in my own bed, with my family around me, I became, from the overstrain of travel, completely prostrated; and I doubt if any one thought I would rally again. And with the sickness came again my piercing distress of mind. I shall not attempt to describe it, for I was indeed in the gall of bitterness. I could say, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me!" I have no doubt but that my mental sufferings were greatly aggravated and intensified by my physical condition; but as I felt them then, and look back to them now, they were awfully real. It was not only the sins that I had committed which gave me trouble, but the wicked nature and evil heart which I felt myself to possess. I seemed to have been endowed with a new and acute sense, testing every event of my past life, and every desire and motion of my heart, and detecting the hidden ingredients of sin, even in my best thoughts and actions; similar to those

delicate yet powerful chemical tests which detect the smallest particles of poison. Was it not the light shining in darkness, and the darkness comprehending it not? Even the hope which I had faintly entertained added poignancy to my distress. It was gone, now, and it appeared to me to have been only the hope of the hypocrite which should fail. In the light of God's holy but broken law, I saw only my just condemnation. Still I could not bear the idea of eternal banishment from the presence of God. I desired to be saved, to be changed, to be made holy; but saw no way in which I could be made just with God. My father, mother and sisters were with me, and said what they could for my encouragement. My father talked and prayed with me, at my bedside, pointing me to Him who is able to save even to the uttermost.

I remember when sitting up in the rocking-chair, reclining my head upon my sister's arm, to try and get a little of that repose which I so much needed, and which I could not get in bed, I thought if I could only lean my head upon the Savior's bosom, as the beloved disciple did, I should find rest to my soul. At last, in unformed and unvoiced prayers for mercy, I felt that I could do nothing but resign myself into the hands of God. And with this giving up of the struggle came an interval of rest. I know not how it came, but in the morning the waves that had surged over my troubled soul were hushed, and "there was a great calm." I found myself in possession of a strange deep sense of peace. It seemed as though the thunders and the whirlwind and the earthquake had passed by, and I was now listening to "the still small voice." I could not account for it. My sense of condemnation had entirely left me, and though feeling no out-

bursting joy, I felt myself in an atmosphere of peace and rest. I tried to think and understand how this peace had come but could not. Had I been fanned by that heavenly breeze that bloweth where it listeth? Could it be "the peace of God which passeth understanding?" And then was formed within me the hope that it was the new birth—that old things had passed away, and all things had become new.

My sister Bessie came into the room and asked me how I felt. I told her of this peace. She said she knew it *would* come, and that as soon as she entered the door and saw my face she knew it *had* come. The first passage of scripture which rested upon my mind that morning was: "And of Zion it shall be said, this man was born in her." It ran thro' my mind constantly during the day. Wherever I might direct my mind, it would continually recur to that, until I began to draw some assurance from it. Then I tried to think what it was to be born in Zion, and to recall some of those "glorious things" which are spoken of her, the city of God. "God is known in her palaces for a refuge." Oh, if I could only feel fully assured that of me "the Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there," what a joy it would be. "For there the glorious Lord shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams." And as I recalled these things I felt as though I could join in the prophet's exclamation and say, "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King,"—and breathings of gratitude and thanksgiving went up from my heart to God.

Although through all these exercises my mind had dwelt much upon the work of Christ, and I realized that there was no other name under heaven, given

among men whereby we could be saved, yet I was now troubled that I had not had a more distinct view of Him as my Savior; that I had not had some striking personal manifestation of Him as Mediator, as having borne my sins, and fulfilled the law in my stead. These thoughts, while they troubled me for a couple of days, did not disturb my hope or drive away that deep peace which I felt. I remembered the blessed assurance, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." I was enabled to appropriate to myself many of the promises of the gospel; and I thought it might be with me as it was with the disciples when Jesus drew near, "but their eyes were holden and they knew him not," although their hearts burned within them as he talked with them by the way. And I trusted that as he had revealed himself to them in the breaking of bread, so he would in due time reveal himself fully to me. I desired to learn of Him; and I prayed that he would be my teacher, would reveal His own truth in my soul, and establish me in it; that I might not only see and understand the finished salvation which he had wrought for all His people, but that I might rejoice in its consolations and live in its power.

In the light of reason and natural religion I had only seen God as the Creator, but through these spiritual experiences I felt that I could now look up to Him as a compassionate and loving Father. And thinking upon this, I comforted myself with these words: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, "Abba, Father." And so, day by day, I realized, more and more, that all spiritual blessings, life, holiness, happiness; all the provisions of grace, mercy and peace,



are given to us in Christ. I learned also this truth, that when we are able to receive things they are given to us. God continually teaching and his children continually learning, they "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." Underneath all my doubts and perplexities, and sense of indwelling sin and unworthiness, there was a placid current of truth and peace which made me feel that God had indeed "done great things for me whereof I was glad." And as I thought upon God's sovereignty and his electing love, I realized how it is that only by the felt certainty of experience does opinion change into soul-satisfying belief.

I cannot pretend to give an account of the way in which I was "led about and instructed," during those two months of convalescence, before I presented myself to the church. The contest between faith and unbelief, between my late piercing experiences and my old rationalistic notions, was protracted. The dragons of speculation gave me many a severe encounter. But though perplexed I was not left in despair, though cast down I was not destroyed. For it is said that they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall run and not be weary, shall walk and not faint.

I sometimes thought I could realize what true and living faith is—"the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen." But who can put into words the height and depth and extent of such spiritual experiences? There are elements in them which language cannot compass. Like an unmeasured ocean they stretch away into infinity. These currents of vital, consecrating spiritual influences, coming from fountains which we see not, and entering in through



avenues which we have never left open, can only be communicated to others by being "revealed from faith to faith." The soul, rejoicing in a new-born sense of divine relationship, feeds upon "hidden manna," and drinks from fountains whose streams never mingle with the babbling flow of worldly springs. And thus we feel that we, who were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. And we watch and wait for those blessed moments, which come at intervals to all the children of God, when the blessed Savior visits us with His smiling presence, and heaven seems graciously to open on our minds; and we feel the love of God, the fellowship of His Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit; and our whole being is swallowed up in adoration and praise.

The duty of following my Savior in the ordinance of baptism, was strongly impressed upon my mind, and I was drawn towards the church. The eighty-fourth psalm expressed my feelings in that respect. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee." Though feeling entirely unworthy to occupy even the humblest place among the children of God, yet I could not repress the desire that I might "dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple." The teachings of the scriptures had been confirmed by my experience that "Salvation is of the Lord," and "according to his own mercy and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." And as I believed that the Old School Baptist Church was the true church of God, teaching this doctrine, and holding fast to the

faith once delivered to the saints, I was drawn towards that church as the only place where I could find a home. Although I had heard but three or four Old School Baptist sermons since I was a boy, yet through the "Signs of the Times" and by intercourse with those of our family who belonged to that church, I had a general knowledge of their doctrine and order. During these two months my brothers, Silas and Warren, had been baptized, though separated from each other and from me, and not aware of each other's intentions. And now I could rejoice with them and in their hope.

As soon as I was well enough to attend, I tried to relate some of these things to the Asylum Church. I found it difficult to tell anything that I thought would satisfy them, and when I sat down I was almost certain they would not receive me. But they did with warm expressions of fellowship. Two weeks afterwards, (August 28th, 1864,) I was baptized by Eld. Chester Schoonover, and received the right hand of fellowship, welcoming me to all the trials and afflictions, as well as the joys and consolations of the church of Christ. The two weeks which intervened between the time of my reception by the church and my baptism, were long ones; filled with doubts and fears and temptations. I feared that I had been deceived and that I had misled the church. Many a time I was made to cry out under these doubts and temptations, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief! Deliver me from temptation. Leave me not to myself again, for vain is the help of man. Show me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation!" But on that beautiful Sunday morning, as I

stood on the banks of the Susquehanna, its waters sparkling in the sunlight, and listened to the brethren as they sang a hymn, the words of our blessed Savior passed through my mind: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," and I felt willing and hopeful and happy.

A few days ago, August 17th, 1865, almost one year after the time above mentioned, on a similar bright morning I stood by the water-side and saw our beloved Elder Beebe lead into the water and bury with Christ in baptism my youngest sister, the one on whose arm I lay when "Peace" was spoken to my troubled soul. And I could not help mentioning it here, as the connection of the two events occurred to my mind, and my soul swelled with gratitude to God for such wonderful blessings.

Since my connection with the church I have enjoyed a degree of peace in believing which has enabled me to "rejoice in hope." I have learned to bless those piercing experiences which showed me what manner of man I was; which let into my soul the light of divine truth, and taught me that I must look alone to Christ as my helper. At times I have been enabled to feel a spirit of resignation to the will of my heavenly Father, and to say: "It is good for me to be afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I do hope in thy word." I should not be able to receive even these bitter and striking exercises as a sufficient ground of hope, if that hope had not been since confirmed by the continued manifestation of a Savior's love to my soul; and by finding implanted within me new desires after holiness of life, and a longing after union and communion with God. I see that the imaginations of my natural heart are still evil,

that I am "subject to vanity, though not willingly," that my walk and conversation are not what they should be. And I can plainly perceive "a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." I have fightings without and fears within, but I trust the Lord will sustain me through them all "by the right hand of his righteousness." I pray that He may renew unto me daily the joys of His salvation—that He will not only save me from the penalties of sin, but from the accursed thing itself; that He will save me continually from pride and envy and hypocrisy; from strife and ignorance and unbelief, and from every evil way; and that He will so replenish me with His grace that I may ever walk as becometh one of His children. That, looking to Jesus for strength, and help, and guidance, I may ever be enabled "to deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God."

When I look at myself, at the corruptions of my heart, and the disobedience of my life, I am cast down and discouraged. But when I am enabled, by faith, to look away from self, and behold Christ as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, as the perfection of His people, I am made to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Sometimes, when filled with doubts and darkness, I think if I were truly a child of grace it would not be so, for true religion gives peace and joy. And again when I feel a good degree of spiritual enjoyment I am ready to blame myself that I am not bowed down with shame at my own unworthiness before God; and thus I strive "to make sad the heart which God has not made sad." And the apostle says, "Rejoice evermore!"

This communication is already much too long ; yet I feel that it is a very inadequate attempt, and I submit it for publication with no little hesitation.

In conclusion, I feel as though it became me, like Hezekiah, "to walk softly before the Lord all the days of my life," because of my transgressions. And I trust that through all the trials, afflictions and temptations of life, I may be enabled, through grace, to say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee ! He who has become thy salvation, will also be thy shield and thy song ; the strength of thy heart as well as thy portion forever !"

JAMES B. DURAND.

## LAST HOURS

The scenes and conversation described and recited in the following letter are as clear and distinct in my mind to-day as when they took place, more than forty-two years ago. How often, when temptations to doubt have assailed me, have I seen again the heavenly light shining in those eyes, which but a little time before had apparently closed in death. Surely, I have said to my soul, that was a glorious reality. Those eyes that had often expressed deep sorrow on account of sin, and that had been filled at times with the shades of death, were now looking through and far beyond death, and were most certainly seeing glorious realities. Even to an unbeliever it must have been apparent that a wonderful change had taken place in that soul, and a wonderful revelation must have been seen and felt.

HERRICK, PA., May 1, 1865

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE:

I have felt that I would like to say something to you, and to our family circle of brethren and sisters who read the "Signs," about the last hours of our dear brother James. If I could so relate what we witnessed as to give an adequate idea of the manner of his departure, I know it would be of interest to all who, through the truth, are resting in hope of immortality, and looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But how to tell it; how to tell of his patient waiting and trust; of his cheerful and uncomplaining endurance through years of bodily affliction; of the calmness with which he bore the last few weeks of intense suffering; of the peculiar trials that so active a mind must pass through in looking forward to death; and of the serenity of mind in which, to his own wonder, he was kept, amid all the shadows cast by the approaching King of Terrors; and, last of all, of his wonderful deliverance, and the glory of heaven that shone upon him as the gates were lifted up for him to enter in; when he presented an example of the fulfillment of that promise that they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, and "shall mount up with wings as eagles."

He had for many years been afflicted with heart disease and paralytic affection, and was a great sufferer at times, yet his persistent energy in business, and his cheerfulness and vivacity in social circles, made him appear to his acquaintances very little like an invalid. About two years ago he was obliged to give up all business, and had remained at home ever

since, passing many a weary day and sleepless night, but never complaining, and seldom failing of that cheerfulness of spirit which constantly enlivened the home circle, and added to the enjoyment of those around him. Some of his spiritual exercises he has told to the readers of the "Signs" within the past two years. Since the time of his uniting with the church his mind had been very much engaged upon spiritual subjects, and his conversation was mainly upon the one theme. He formerly wrote much for publication; but since then when he was able to write it was upon the subject of religion.

I cannot forbear to allude here to the great humility, and the retiring spirit, manifested upon this subject by one who, upon all other subjects, had always been so independent. He was very fearful lest he should appear to be in opposition to the Word; and greatly distrusting his own understanding, he looked to the voice of the church much with the same spirit with which a little child attends to the voice of its mother; yet he could receive as truth only what he saw in the Word. He seemed to feel that it was too assuming for him to present publicly his own views, especially where they appeared to conflict in any way with those of others.

About the middle of March, having been out a short distance to an evening meeting, he was taken with severe spasms in the chest and a great laboring for breath. From that time he kept his room, though able to sit up, until within two hours of his departure. He used all efforts, as he had always done, to obtain relief, but it was evident that from the first he regarded this as his last sickness. Yet he did not at any time speak directly of it as such. It seems as though it



was out of consideration and anxiety for our feelings that he avoided seeming to give up hope of recovery. He did, however, speak of it as different from any sickness he had ever had before, and was without that vivacity which he usually had in sickness. He seldom smiled, though his face wore an expression of serenity most of the time. He had occasionally great depression of mind, when he would speak of a strange feeling of loneliness, which the presence of friends could not overcome. Once he repeated in a sad, wistful tone, "Though a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many." He talked a great deal on religious subjects, and loved to dwell upon the love and unity of spirit which exists among Christians, and which should be manifested. One of his favorite stanzas, which he often repeated, was :

"How pleasant, how divinely fair,  
O Lord of hosts, Thy dwellings are ;  
With long desire my spirit faints  
To meet the assembly of the saints."

"O how very carefully," he remarked, "one ought to walk who is a member of the Church of Christ. It is a great thing to be a consistent Old School Baptist." He spoke frequently of the duty of visiting the brethren, and especially the sick. "When one is suffering," he said, "the mind often cannot think connectedly, nor recall even familiar portions of scripture; but he can follow another, and receive great comfort in listening to conversation and prayer. Therefore how necessary it is to visit the sick." He expressed himself as greatly comforted in listening to father in prayer, who was himself very feeble.



I was away from home when he was taken sick, expecting to remain some time, and he would not have me called home lest he might be calling me from duty. I did not know how severe his sickness was, but one day I had a peculiar experience or vision. It appeared to me that I was walking along with my brother, as in a dream, when he went on away from me in a forward and upward direction. The next day I went home, arriving a week before his death. He seemed unusually glad to see me. After conversing a while he said, "I feel lonesome. It is hard to feel lonesome when all the family are here." Once, as we sat together in the night, he repeated very solemnly, "In the day of prosperity be joyful; in the day of adversity consider; God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him." I was enquiring one day what would be an appropriate subject for a circular letter which I was appointed to write. He said, "Take some subject relating to the love which should bind the members of the church together; or take the subject of the death-bed of the Christian, and show what will comfort and sustain him there; for that is what all are thinking of; and to deliver from the fear of death is said to be the object of our Saviour in taking flesh and blood upon him." He then mentioned this passage as one he had never seen or heard explained: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Then I knew that he felt the shadow of death upon him. But he did not speak directly of his own death at that or at any other time.

I allude to these things that you may know some-

thing of the disposition of his mind, of his occasional depression and anxiety in looking forward, of the calmness and trust that controlled his fear, and of his patience under intense pain; so that thus following him, you may see, as we did, the sudden and wonderful breaking forth of light and joy upon his soul.

One night as he lay in unconsciousness I opened the Bible and turned to Ecclesiastes, hoping to find some comfort. The first words that met my eye were: "No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath any power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war." I was startled, and said to myself, "I ought to have opened to the Psalms for comfort," as I hastily turned back. My eyes instantly rested upon these words: "Thou wilt strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Then I knew that he must soon go from us. The next day, as we all sat in conversation, I told of the words in the Psalm which I had opened to in the night, without alluding to the words in Ecclesiastes. He turned to me with unusual animation and said, "That is the first scripture I saw after I was taken sick." A very pleasant smile was on his face then.

He was speaking one day of the little meetings of brethren in conference, how pleasant they were, and how delightful it was when of an afternoon there was singing, conversation on spiritual things, and prayer. "But," he said, "when we come to the sick room, and to weary, painful nights, it is different. Then religion is brought down to its spirit and essence; then our hope is tried." He spoke freely of his own hope, that it had not failed him; that he could not but look the more earnestly to Christ the

more he saw of his own depravity and helplessness. Amid all his bodily suffering, he said he had great peace and quietness of mind, but did not realize that manifest presence of the Saviour, nor that great joy, which he would like to.

For many days he had been unable to sleep on account of spasms which caught him whenever he lost consciousness. Our mother and sisters, who had so often watched him in sickness, were always, one or more of them, with him. About three o'clock on the morning of the 20th of April, after a spell of sickness, greater, he said, than he had ever known before, he walked from the chair to the bed, saying, "Now, if all is quiet perhaps I can get a little sleep." He failed rapidly, and made no objection to have the whole family called. He had always before objected to have any broken of rest more than was necessary in attending him. He was soon unable to lift his head. His sufferings were still intense, and he kept his hands clasped, as if in supplication. I asked if he found the Saviour precious. "O, yes," he replied, "I have found him so all through my sickness; but I do not enjoy what I want to." All was then quiet for some time. Father and mother, brothers and sisters, stood silently and he lay quietly. Finally, as his eyes grew dim and his hearing seemed to fail, I asked in a loud voice, "Do you feel as though you were going home?" He opened his eyes slowly, with a kind of sad expression, and said very slowly, "O, Silas, don't talk of that now; I have been so sick and so troubled all night." He was a long time saying that, and then we thought he would speak no more, for the look of death came over his face, his eyes closed, his lips parted and grew fixed, and his moaning breath grew fainter. He lay thus

for perhaps a quarter of an hour, and we were looking for the last breath, which seemed almost to have come, when his lips appeared trying to move again. Suddenly they formed plainly the words: "Great glory! Amen!" And he raised himself without help in bed, and opened his eyes, filled with a clear, unearthly radiance, brighter and at the same time milder than anything I ever saw, while a smile of perfect happiness overspread his face. "Praise the Lord!" he said. "O how I love my Saviour! How can I help loving Him, He is so beautiful! and He has loved me with an everlasting love. Behold, what manner of love!" "Mother," he said, "you need not rub my feet any more. They were cold, but they are all warm now. O, such love! He is taking me into His everlasting Kingdom. I have hoped for this, and now my hope is fulfilled. I hoped in His mercy and in His judgments, —in His judgments; I hoped in His atonement; I hoped in His death and in His glorious resurrection; and now it is all true." Then he gave expression to a kind of prayer, or psalm of praise, most sublime; but we cannot remember it, nor can we remember half that he said. As he lay back again he said faintly, "When Ephraim spake tremblingly he exalted himself in Israel;" then he seemed to pass into the silence of death again. But again, and three times, he raised himself thus, with renewed bursts of praise, speaking rapidly and clearly as he sat up. Once he said, "Let me get up and sit in a chair and tell it;" and I raised him to stand for an instant on the floor, but there seemed no strength in his limbs and we laid him down again. He whispered as he was laid down, "You ought to have let me do it," and went into apparent unconsciousness again.

All this time he seemed to be almost lost to earthly things, and, although he spoke our names as his eye would rest on one of us, yet he did not seem to regard us so much as members of an earthly family, sorrowing and mourning for him, but as brethren in Christ, rejoicing and praising with him. And this word, brethren, he repeated many times as he talked, as though he felt himself surrounded by the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, whom he was addressing. He repeated many portions of scripture and dwelt upon them. He said once, very slowly and with great distinctness: "Adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. O, brethren, let us do it. Let us adorn the doctrine in our lives and conversation."

The fourth and last time he raised himself up was after a long interval of silence, and we thought surely we would hear no more. As he raised himself he said, "O, I must praise Him if I do exert myself too much." Then turning to me he said, "Why, Silas, I praise Him because I cannot help it; His love is so wonderful; and it is not for a day, or for a year, but for ever and ever, world without end." And as he said this there was such a glow of perfect rapture on his face as no words can express. Then followed some sublime strains of poetry, new to us, and seeming to come as new from him. Then he said, "Can't you all go with me where I am going?" Nine of us stood around the bed now, all members of the church, and to each he had seemed to address some word, and to all of us seemed to be trying to tell the wonders he was seeing. "But," he said, "I can't tell it. Read the one hundred and fourteenth Psalm." "The fourteenth?" was asked by Rosina, the youngest of the family, for he spoke indistinctly. Then very forcibly,

"The *hundred* and fourteenth. It is all there. Jordan is driven back! I shall faint or go in a minute."

We laid him back tenderly on the pillow. There was no movement any more, except the softest breathing as of an infant for a short time. His face was perfectly serene, with no sign of pain or trouble, but a kind of heavenly radiance overspreading it, while his eyes, from underneath their half closed lids, seemed fixed, with the solemn light of a holy and eternal joy shining in them, upon the far-off, infinite glories of heaven, as though they saw then the King in His beauty, and beheld the land that is very far off. As he lay thus, his head resting high on the pillows, he who had always been so feeble physically in life, looked strong in death, like a conqueror; and as I read aloud the words of that wonderful Psalm, we knew what it was he would have told; how death had been conquered; how the waves, which had surged so high, threatening to overwhelm him, had fled at the approach of one whose trust was in the Lord; how the swelling tides of Jordan had been driven back, so that he who had hoped in the Lord, though so tremblingly, might

"Pass the river telling  
The triumphs of his King."

Our mourning was turned into joy, and our lamentations into songs of praise and thanksgiving.

It seemed a special favor of the Father of mercies to us, and to the brethren, that he should thus have been made to pause on the threshold of glory, and leave so wonderful an evidence that the weakest hope, if it rest only upon Christ, is sure and cannot fail. We had followed him in the trials of his experience; we

had known how entirely his hope rested upon the Word; how often he had been troubled that he had not such bright and vivid experiences as others had; how much he feared, at times, that his was not a genuine repentance and faith; yet how he could not but trust in the Lord, for there was no one else to trust in, and nothing else for him; and how he still must believe, in spite of temptations to doubt, that the peace he sometimes experienced was the peace of God. We had known how precious the Scriptures were to him, because it was there alone, instead of in himself, that he found the confirmation of his hope; how its promises were clasped to his heart and treasured up; and how glorious the doctrine of the Bible seemed to him. We had known how he felt that his were the feeblest evidences upon which ever a child rested his hope. And now we, who had only the same trembling hope, saw it brighten in him, as heart and flesh failed, till it was lost in sight, and the glory he had longed and prayed for was revealed to him in our presence. Why should we doubt any more? O, how trifling the earth seemed; how glorious the hope of immortality! He had spoken no word about dying, nor had he bidden us "Good-bye," but the manner of his going, and his expressions of praise and joy, lifted us for a time above the region of sorrow.

Once, I remember now, there seemed a little consciousness of the sorrow he was leaving with us, as he said, in a more languid and dreamy voice, "And our pleasant home will be a little weary, but it will not be for long." And turning to Sister Bessie, he said, "Bessie, come home as soon as you can." He had always had a childlike fondness for home, and, though many of his years were spent away, he would



never give the name, home, to any other than that of his childhood. He had been in perils and seemingly at the point of death when far from here, and many anxious thoughts had gone out to him. It was a privilege hardly to have been expected that he should be at home when he came to lie down at the last, and that our father and mother, and all the living brothers and sisters, should stand about his bed. The winter was past, and the night was gone. The morning sun of a lovely spring day was shining in at his window as he left us for his home in glory. We could not tell when his breathing ceased, so softly and quietly he passed away.

The closing lines of the last poem he wrote appears as though he foresaw the close of his own life when he wrote them.

The silent, shadowy hours move onward slowly,  
But a sweet sense of joy abides with me;  
One thought alone makes the night watches holy  
The blessed thought that I am still with Thee.

And morning cometh! soon these watchings ended,  
Soon all these earthly nights and vigils o'er,  
On the freed soul shall break the radiance splendid  
Of perfect day upon the sinless shore.

O, there shall be no more of restless sighing,  
No more of sorrow and of blighting care;  
For in that glorious home of bliss undying,  
No shadow falleth, and no night is there.

Wrapped in such thoughts, peace floweth like a river,  
Filling with voiceless songs the silence deep;  
Songs holy as the Angels sing forever;  
And thus thou givest Thy beloved sleep.









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